



Rambling Willie

Keeping Christ Alive in Harness Racing!

Since 1983

In God We Trust



Christian Harness Horsemen's Association Newsletter

December 2023

Remember,
I pray for all
our members
every day.



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Wanted

Praise Reports and Articles

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From Chaplain Lee and the
Board of Directors

Down the Stretch

By Chaplain Lee Alphen

Every time I hear the song “Big Bad John” on Willie’s Roadhouse, I think of 2011 Little Brown Jug winner Big Bad John. Everyone was on their feet as Ron Potter popped the earplugs, causing Roll with Joe to battle Big Bad John down the stretch. David Miller and Big Bad John held them off, winning the 66th Little Brown Jug. The song “Big Bad John” was broadcast all around the track and stable area at the Delaware Fairgrounds. Then every time the Ohio-based trotter made a guest appearance in the coming years, his song was played.

One night an angel visited some shepherds in the pasture where they were taking care of their sheep. The shepherds were terrified because God’s glorious light shone all around them. The angel told them not to be afraid, and gave them the good news about Jesus being born in the stable and said Jesus would bring great joy to all the people.

All of a sudden, a choir of angels appeared praising God and singing, “Glory to God in the highest heaven, and on earth peace, goodwill among people” (Luke 2:13-14 NRSVUE).

After the angels left, the shepherds hurried off to the stable where they found Mary, Joseph and Jesus. As we can imagine, after such an awe-inspiring experience the shepherds amazed everyone they met by telling them about Jesus and the angels. Then the shepherds headed back to their sheep, “glorifying and praising God for all the things they had heard and seen, which were just as they had been told” (Luke 2:20 NIV).

According to CHHA representative

Rich Thorstenson, Big Bad John lived up to his name. When he came back to the Delaware Fairgrounds in subsequent years, Rich would go to the Jug barn to visit him. He said, “you’ve got to watch him or you will lose a finger.”

The song of the angels glorifying God is now sung around the world in many languages and has been recorded by many different musicians. Since God’s favor rests on all people of good will, it is right for us to give Him honor, glory and praise. Whenever we praise and thank God, we are filled with peace, joy and happiness. Focusing on the negative and evil in the world brings stress and discouragement.

In his book *The Effects of Praise*, Andrew Wommack recalls three examples from the Bible. The prophet Habakkuk wrote a very sad book pronouncing judgement on the nation of Judah because they had rejected God and refused to repent. His prophecy came true and the Babylonians totally destroyed Judah. Yet, Habakkuk says at the end of his book that in spite of all the destruction, “I will rejoice in the Lord; I will exult in the God of my salvation. God, the Lord, is my strength” (Habakkuk 3:18-19 NRSVUE).

King David often had reason to be discouraged and distressed. He even wept before the Lord. However, in spite of all the terrible circumstances around him, he focused his attention on God and was strengthened. Scripture tells us David was a man after God’s own heart (1 Samuel 13:14). Wommack believes one reason for this is that David constantly praised God even when he was being mocked and ridiculed or disciplined for one of his transgressions by one of his wives and others.

Stretch cont. top of page 2

Stretch cont. from page 1

The apostle Paul certainly experienced many challenges during his ministry, including time in prison. Yet he wrote to the church in Thessalonica, which was facing persecution, "Rejoice always, pray without ceasing, give thanks in all circumstances, for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus for you" (1 Thessalonians 5:16-18 NRSVUE).

Coach Luke Brooks in the movie *Running the Bases* encourages his team and everyone associated with it to focus on what is good, positive, true and right—in other words of God—rather than all the negativity and evil going on around them. Coach Brooks is right and I really enjoyed the movie. I found it on Tubi but it is on some of the other streaming platforms as well.

Think about the sacrifice Jesus made. He chose to be born in a stable surrounded by animals, to grow up as a nomad, and then accepted ridicule, torture and death as a common criminal just so we could live with Him forever in heaven.

When our focus is on God's blessings, it makes us want to constantly give praise and thanks to God. With the angels and the shepherds let's sing God's song of glory and encourage others in their faith so they too can be with us in paradise.

God may surprise us by holding off the devil as we head down the stretch towards heaven.



The newsletter is available to receive in the mail or online. In January we gave everyone we had an email address for an online version trial. Our email server is going up on their rates so we are ending the online trial. Those who requested the online version will still receive it that way. If you don't receive a link to the January newsletter and want one, let us know.

Blessings from God

From Rich Wojcio...

Just wanted to thank you and those who joined in Praying for my sister Denise's surgery on her lung last week. The surgery went well and she is home recovering from it. It will take about a month and so far there are no complications. She is still in pain some days. Please continue Praying for my sister if you can. Thank you always, God Bless You and everyone, Rich Wojcio



May the angels lead you into paradise
Memorials posted at www.chha.net

Memorial Contributions

In memory of **Joe Adamsky** by: Lyndel Adamsky
 In memory of **Doug Ackerman** by: Arnold Williams
 In memory of **Bobby Brown** by: Jo-Dee Brown
 In memory of **Lois Combs** by: Loren and Paul Combs and Joanne White
 In memory of **Dr Michael Czinkota** by: Thomas Cooke
 In memory of **Faye Duford** by: Jo-Dee Brown
 In memory of **Patricia Ann Ebersole** by: Ohio Harness Horsemen's Assoc.
 In memory of **John Foye** by: Dr Bob and Lisa Schwartz
 In memory of **Harold and Sue Kellu** by: Deborah and Jeff Tillia
 In memory of **Meagan, Melissa and Sam McKee** by: Amy Bondon
 In memory of **Janice Secrest** by: Loren and Paul Combs
 In memory of **Harold Skaggs** by: Dr Bob and Lisa Schwartz
 In memory of **Andy Wood** by: Longshot Stables

Amazing cont. from page 6

more death or mourning or crying or pain, for the old order of things has passed away" (Revelation 21:4 NIV).

The shepherds are told: "Today in the town of David a Savior has been born to you; he is Christ the Lord" (Luke 2:11 NIV).

Thank You, God, for the blessings of this time of the year. But most of all thank You for the gift of Your Son Jesus. "For the wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord." (Romans 6:23 NIV).

Thank You Jesus for stepping into our world, being born a baby boy then dying on the cross for our sins. May we draw close to You this season.

And if you've never given your life to God, you can do so by expressing yourself in prayer: "God, I thank You for Jesus. I admit my sin and turn from it with Your help. I ask You Jesus to be my Savior, my Lord. Amen."

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Gifts for Family and Friends

10 Rambling Willie Note Cards (see picture)

Horseshoe Nail Cross necklaces and key rings—see below

CHHA Hat

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Books

Daily Oats by Chaplain Sam Ed Spence

Still: A Story of the Black Doctor of the Jersey Pines by Edmund R Gager

Sound Mouth—Sound Horse, The Gager Method of Equine Dental Care by ER Gager and Bob “Dusty” Rhodes

Downloading God by Jack Levine

Live A Life That Matters for God by Jack Levine

My Addict Your Addict by Jack Levine

Where the Rubber Meets the Road with God by Jack Levine

Don’t Blow It With God by Jack Levine

Jack Levine’s books are also available FREE as downloads at:
<https://www.jackalanlevine.com/ebooks>



Rambling Willie Remembers

These lovely 5 x 7 Rambling Willie cards are packaged in sets of 10 cards. They are blank inside.

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Posters are 16 x 24 sticky vinyl.



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Horseshoe Nail Item Order Form
Orders can also be placed at
www.chha.net/products



Obituaries continued from page 5

Nicholas Anthony Cirillo, 88, of The Bronx, NY, died Oct 22. Nicholas was a detective in the New York Police Department and was vice-president of New York City Off Track Betting. He was a member of the United States Harness Writers Association.



John David Foy, 69, of Leesburg, OH, died Sept 14. John retired from the London Correctional Institution after more than 30 years. His greatest pastime was being with his family and he enjoyed fishing, camping and traveling. John was a friend of Dr. Bob and Lisa Schwartz.

Daryl Glazer, 62, died Sept 28. Daryl was second trainer for the Raz MacKinzie stable in Canada during the late 1980s, eventually racing at the Meadowlands. In 1990 he joined Richie Silverman's stable in Freehold, NJ, where he became an integral part of the Silverman family. In 2003 Daryl and his partner, Chris Yochim purchased their farm in Parkesburg, PA and embarked on a small breeding program.

Brittany Renee "Boo" Harter, 28, of Delaware, OH, died September 13. Brittany enjoyed riding and showing Western Pleasure Horses and was an avid fan of the Delaware County Fair and Little Brown Jug. She was a cosmetologist.



Bonnie L. Kern, 95, of Chillicothe, OH, died Oct 10. Bonnie was the executive secretary for the United States Trotting Association. She and her late husband, Wayne, shared a strong interest in show horses. She was a member of the Frankfort Baptist Church.



Carol Macomber, 79, of Winter Haven, FL, died October 21. Carol bred and owned harness horses. She traveled and never missed a race her son and brother were in. Her late husband, Dick, was a life-long trainer and driver. Their son, Ricky, continues to race in Indiana.



David P McNeight, 82, of Hamburg, NY, died Oct 22. David was an avid horseman for over 60 years and enjoyed training horses. He was also a local business owner.



Richard L. "Dick" Neff, 95, of Pataskala, OH, died Oct 13. Dick was a second-generation Ohio horseman. After retiring from the Columbus Police Department, racing horses became his full-time job. Dick's son, Charlie and Shelley Neff, are CHHA members.



Ross M. Perry, 68, died Oct 22. Ross owned, trained and groomed many horses at Buffalo Raceway and Batavia Downs for about three decades. He worked as a second trainer for long periods of time for local WNY trainers, Jim Mulcahy and Joe Sarago. He owned many horses throughout those years with his beloved cousins.

Barry Probbler, 73, died Sept 24. Barry trained and drove at most east coast tracks. He maintained a small and successful stable for almost half a century. His way with trotters was one of his strengths. He became a respected go to guy when other trainers were at wits end with a "problem child". He was also able to patch a quarter crack.

Janice M. Secrest, 73, of Celina, OH, died Aug 21. Janice enjoyed attending area fairs and watching harness racing. She worked for Reynolds+Reynolds and Relizon. She was a member of the Mercer County Harness Horsemen's Association. She was good friends with the Combs family.



Harold Glenn Skaggs, 84, of Washington Court House, OH, died Sept 16. Harold worked as a farmer and was the Fayette County Fairgrounds Manager for twenty-one years. Later he worked as a maintenance man for Peebles and did zoning for Fayette County / Union Township. He was a member of the Route 38 Church of Christ and served as the Chairman for the Church for many years.



Mel Smorra, 82, died Sept 27. Mel trained Standardbreds at the former Roosevelt, Yonkers and Meadowlands. He served as head trainer for John Chapman Stable. When John passed, Mel opened his own public stable.

Abram (Abe) Stoltzfus, 81, died Oct 4. Abe began driving his dad to racetracks to buy road horses when he was 16 and then became hooked on harness racing. He trained and drove many Grand Circuit horses and was proud of his red, white and black stable. He was also great at selecting yearlings at the sales. Spring Garden Ranch was his favorite training facility.

Sherry Kamps Thomson, 83, of Delaware, OH, died Sept. 22, 2023. Sherry taught English and finished her career as the Director of Curriculum with Urbana, IL City Schools. She married Tom Thomson in 2022 and is stepmother to the Little Brown Jug's Chip and T Thomson.

Garrett James Whelan, 43, of Bracebridge, Ontario, died Oct 5. Garrett owned trained and drove harness horses. He enjoyed spending time at home in Bracebridge and on the water in Muskoka.



Ben S. Wood III, 78, of Hopkinsville, KY, died Sep 21. Ben and his father raised Standardbreds and raced at the Red Mile in Lexington. He owned the Copper Still stores and Blue Lantern Farms. He served as President of the Christian County Historical Society.



Sources for Obituary information include:

www.ustrotting.com, www.harnesslink.com and www.Standardbredcanada.ca

Obituaries

Walter B. Bianconi, 93, of Barberton, OH, died Oct 8. Walter was the father of longtime Northfield Park director of racing operations, Dave Bianconi. He practiced family medicine for 34 years and served on the staff of the Barberton Citizens Hospital for 43 years. He also held a part-time teaching position for 20 years.



Bobby Allan Brown, 86, of Kingsville, ON, died Oct 11. Bob established a farm just outside of Kingsville, ON. He boarded and bred harness horses and also worked as Paddock Judge at Leamington Raceway and in Dresden, ON. He retired from Bell Canada after 35 years.



Carmen Lee Conrad, 77, of Canal Winchester, OH, died Sept. 16. She had a honey booth at the Ohio State Fair.

Robyn Cuffey, 69, died Oct 10. Robyn was instrumental in founding Futures For Standardbreds (FFS), an organization committed to retraining and rehoming New England-based Standardbreds as they transition from life

on the racetrack to life as pleasure horses. The organization has rescued and rehomed close to 100 horses.

Dr Michael Czinkota, 71, of Luray, VA, died November 23. Dr Czinkota was Professor Emeritus of International Business and Trade at Georgetown University. He also offered courses in the United Kingdom at the University of Kent and the University of Birmingham.



Faye Ilene Duford, 74, died Oct 3. Faye was a pillar of the Standardbred Canada family. Her husband, Rod, trains harness horses locally.

Richard Alan "Rick" Flanders, 71, of East Wallingford, VT, died Oct 3. Rick earned his driving license when he was 16 and enjoyed a career training and driving harness horses. He also was a talented blacksmith. Fourteen years ago he switched gears and became the starter at Scarborough Downs and Plainridge Park Casino.



Obituaries continued on page 4

Prayer Corner

Please pray for all the people on our Prayer List who are battling cancer, especially:

Lynn Antonelli, Lew Arsenault, Emily Bier, Debbie Boardman, Amy Bondon, Dianne Boyken, Georgianna Brocco, Jana Brocco, Gary Bryant, Lore Burke, Rick Carson, Barbara Carter, Mike Carter, Sam Castimore, Candice Coleman, Barbara Connors, Joe Crothers, Thomas Daniel, Mike Deeters, Ashley Dennon-Coen, Barbara Dinning, Scott Dube, Jerry Eby, Chaplain Tom Farley, Francine Federici, Tiffany Fisher, Katie Folkins, Teresa Hubbard Givens, Holly Graffam, Pastor Bill Grant, Cody Greeno, Margaret Groce, Rose Hennessey, Morris Hoagland, Glenda Holloway, Audrey Henry, Layla Hundertpfund, Betty James, Rita Jacobs, Bob Jones, Jennifer Jugg, AJ Keaton, Julie Kerr, Donnie Knight, David Kovach, Betsy Krantz, Larry Lederman, Rox Liles, Anabelle Lisi, Tommy Long, Kevin Mack, Ricky Macomber, Nelson Malin, Kim Maples, Wilma Mattuci, Joyceann McClelland, Nelson Miller, Frank Mirahmadi, Paul Molnar, Bob Montane, Lalya Mosley, Linda Moyer, Corey Murphy, Howard Niels, Jay O'Neil, John Panetta, Carol Parker, Margie Polhamus, Valerie Prescott, Leigh Raymer, Robyn Rembleski, Emily Roper, Daren Richner, Julie Schwartz, Del Smart, Larry Smith, Doug Stringer, Jimmy Takter, Bobbi Tanner, Jack Taylor, Brenda Tippin, Gary Tyron, Brittanty Vondenhuevel, Roland Wardel, Lucille Wick, Teresa Willabus, Kate Williams, Steve Wiseman, Marty Woebkenberg, Alan Wroblewski, Allan Wright, Joyce Zeasapolowski.

These friends are also in need of our ongoing prayers:

Jason Apperti, Jordan Aracena, Ken Bartels, Ellen Beinbauer, Gary Bennett, John Berry, Peter Blood, Marilyn Bondon, Stephanie Bouchard, Danny Breton, Betsy Brown, Kevin Burns, Mary Burton, Bob Cain, Carol Ann Case, Thelma Chrisman, Melisa Cino, Joan Collins, Anthony Coletta, Chet Crane, Karen Crothers, Anna Farley, Scott Freck, Sylvain Gagnon, Greg

Gehman, Richie Gillock, Bob Goth, Barbara and Brent Graham, Debbie Gray, Bob Jones, Kim Hankins, Jimmy Hart, Joyce Hart, Bob Hilliard, Vickie Howard, Ruby Hensley, Miguel Hernandez, Paul and Mrs Hershey, Carol Heusinkveld, Trudy Hite, Jerry Hissam, Joyce Hollingsworth, John Hostler, Jason Hughes, Jesse Hughes, Don James, Kenny Kane, Dave Kelly, Michael Klark, Victor Kiss, Larry Lawter, Ray Levay, Sam Lilli, Art Lisi, Jr, Lowell Lockhart, Katherine Lonager, Ernie Lowell, Sharon Lowell, Tommy Luchento, Faye Mackey, Terry Mahar, Joanne Maiorca, Pedro Martinez, Jr, Cheryl Mauran, Dean Miller, Peg Miller, Raymond Miller, Nancy Miner, John Morris, Mike Murphy, Doug Nash, Elaine Parlin, Ronnie Parker, Waverly Parsons, Susan Parks, Doc Parry, Donna Phillips, Rita Polese, Noreen Paulen, Frank Profaci, Loyd Ranger, Del Richards, Donnie Richards, Denis Rogers, Ray Romanetti, Tori Scott, Jody Sexton, Lynn Silver, Delma Smart, Rev Edward Smith, Madisyn Smith, Ryan Stahl, Caryn Stellino, Brad Strawser, Lee Anne Taylor, Carol Tebo, Myra and Al Terwilliger, Marsh Townley, Lorraine Truitt, Charlotte Truitt, Phillip Truitt, Mel Turcott, Vincenzo Villante, Justin Vance, Barry Vicroy, Steve Warner, Greggie Welch, Jr, Charles Weiss, Alice Williams, Anne Winters.

Please try to keep me updated about the people on our prayer list.

Please pray for those serving in the military, especially:

John Beauregard, Chris Petruzzo, Sgt David Thomas, Elizabeth Welch and Nigel Willabus.

Special Intentions for this month:

Steven Beauregard is recovering from an overdose.
 Robin Cino has constant excruciating nerve pain.
 Richard Dunmire has heart issues.
 Anna Farley is recovering from spinal surgery.
 Georganna had tumors removed from her spine and skull.
 Karolyn Gehman had rotator cuff surgery.
 Irish Joe Hanney was severely kicked in his head.
 Tom Long has a brain tumor.
 Connie Polhamus has knee problems.
 Cheri Stambaugh - pray her cancer is in remission.

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Salem, NH 03079
USA



Please indicate
Address corrections



Amazing Happenings

By Pastor Stan Gill

Son of the late Dr Howard Gill

On July, 1969, something amazing happened. I was 12 years old and living in a horse barn that summer at Louisville Downs working as a horse groom: cleaning stalls, harnessing horses, walking horses and so forth.

When the work was done on Saturday, I would go home for the weekend. And while home, along with half a billion other people watching TV, I was one of the witnesses of that "something amazing" that took place.

That "something amazing" was the APOLLO 11 moon landing and the first human beings to walk on the moon. Neil Armstrong and Buzz Aldrin, with only *seconds* left of landing fuel, made the risky landing in a lunar module called the Eagle in a shallow moon crater named the "Sea of Tranquility".

Armstrong planted a footprint on the moon with the words, "That's one small step for a man, one giant leap for mankind." Buzz Aldrin shortly joined him and for the next 2.5 hours they explored the moon's surface. They left behind an American Flag and a plaque that reads: "Here men from the planet Earth first set foot upon the moon. July 1969 A.D. We came in peace for all mankind."

In the Christmas season we remember something far bigger than man stepping on a lifeless moon: God in human flesh coming down from heaven to this earth. Not for a mere 2.5 hours but year after year after year ... thirty plus years on this earth was Jesus, the Son of God!

Amazingly, he was born a baby that first Christmas. He needed diapers, milk, was burped, and he learned to crawl, walk, speak His first words. "She will give birth to a son, and you are to give him the name Jesus, because he will save his people from their sins" (Matthew 1:21-23 NIV). All this took place to fulfill what the Lord had said through the prophet: "The virgin will be with child and



will give birth to a son, and they will call him Immanuel" which means, "God with us" (Isaiah 7:14 NIV).

"God with us." Not: God who doesn't care. Not: God who can't relate or understand a Covid 19 world. Not: God who created the world and then stepped away forgetting about everyone.

"God with us." Jesus stepping into our diseased, sin-fallen world, dying on the cross for our sins, being raised back to life and coming back again. Massively better than a moon landing. Jesus shows us the way to be at peace with God and have eternal life.

"Jesus answered, 'I am the way and the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me'" (John 14:6 NIV).

"For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life." (John 3:16 NIV).

Now, he made a way for us to be in a place, NOT hell, but a place where "He will wipe every tear from their eyes. There will be no

Amazing cont. on page 2

